



ZIMBABWEANS AND AMERICANS
IN PARTNERSHIP TO FIGHT HIV/AIDS
PEPFAR

EVALUATION REPORT:

Evaluating the impact of FACT livelihoods programs on the economic status of women in households affected by HIV and AIDS in four wards of Chipinge and Buhera Districts of Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

April 2015

Report compiled by the:

**Family AIDS Care Trust (FACT Mutare) in the –
Zimbabwe Gender Challenge Initiative (GCI)**

This project has been supported by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through Cooperative between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) under the terms of Cooperative Agreement Number: 1U2GPS003118-01





Picture 1: A Focus Group Discussion with Chinetsa support group members in their thriving garden in ward 19 of Buhera district

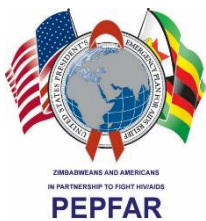
This project has been supported by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through Cooperative between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) under the terms of Cooperative Agreement Number: 1U2GPS003118-01

Author(s)

Name	Role	E-mail
Pemberai Zambezi	Principal Investigator (FACT)	pzambezi@fact.org.zw

Implementation research expertise, mentoring and technical support from:
Absolom Masendeke (RTI) and Fortunate Machingura (RTI)

© Gender Challenge Initiative
 2015, Harare, Zimbabwe



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This evaluation would not have been possible without the financial support and technical commitment of PEPFAR and Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International respectively. I would like to especially thank Absolom Masendeke and Fortunate Machingura of RTI International for their expertise in implementation science research. I also extend my sincere appreciation to FACT's co-investigator and research manager Mr. Pemberai Zambezi for his indispensable support during fieldwork and data analysis activities. Our trainees in the data collection tool represented by various government ministries and development practitioners, deserve special recognition for a job well done during the collection, preliminary analysis, validation and verification of data. Various government ministries, development practitioners and community members who took part in the community dialogues and data validation processes require special recognition. Our two community volunteers in Buhera and Chipinge (Pastor Admire Tomu Jambaya and Mrs Rudo Jack) respectively, need special recognition for the meticulous way in which they organized groundwork logistics for the data collection team to be able to access households that benefited from the livelihoods programs. Last though not least, I would like to acknowledge the contributions from interviewees engaged in this impact evaluation of FACT's livelihoods projects in the sites visited namely Buhera (*Wards 17 and 19*) and Chipinge (*Wards 9 and 14*), as their responses assisted in building up this final research report.

The opinions expressed herein are those of the evaluator and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funding agency.

ACRONOMYS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
FACT	Family AIDS Caring Trust
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MWAGCD	Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RTI	Research Triangle International

CONTENTS

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
2	INTRODUCTION	8
2.1	Background to the impact evaluation.....	8
2.2	Rationale of the impact evaluation.....	9
2.3	Goal of the evaluation.....	9
2.4	Objectives of the evaluation	9
2.5	Study questions.....	10
2.6	General approach.....	10
3	METHODOLOGY.....	11
3.1	Study design.....	11
3.2	Study population.....	11
3.3	Sampling procedures	11
3.4	Evaluation instruments.....	12
3.5	Data collection tool training	13
3.6	Data analysis plan	13
4	RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM THE IMPACT EVALUATION.....	14
4.1	Buhera district.....	14
4.1.1	The goat project.....	14
4.1.2	The heifer project.....	16
4.1.3	Support groups of people living with HIV	17
4.1.4	Overall picture of FACT supported projects in Buhera	19
4.2	Chipinge district	20
4.2.1	Community income generating livelihoods activities.....	20
4.2.2	Situation before the programs/support	21
4.2.3	Change after support	21
4.2.4	Women economic empowerment.....	22
4.2.5	Marketing strategies, domestic animal disease management trainings.....	22
4.2.6	Use of knowledge gained.....	23
4.2.7	Project sustainability.....	23
4.2.8	Impact of the project	23
5	COMMUNITY DIALOGUES – GENDER ISSUES.....	24
5.1	Reactions from participants – Buhera	24
5.2	Reactions from participants – Chipinge.....	24
6	RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS.....	25
6.1	Buhera District	25
6.2	Chipinge District.....	25
7	CRITICAL EMERGING ISSUES AND CONCLUSION.....	25
8	REFERENCES	27
9	APPENDICES	28
9.1	Data enumerators’ list	28
9.1.1	Buhera district.....	28
9.1.2	Chipinge district	28
9.2	Gallery of Pictures.....	29

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation under report covers a period of fieldwork data collection, data analysis and community dialogues and data validation processes done in the months of July and September 2014. The aim of the research project was to evaluate FACT livelihoods programs on the economic status of women in households affected by HIV and AIDS in four wards of Chipinge and Buhera Districts of Manicaland Province in Zimbabwe.

The objectives of the evaluation study were as follows:

1. Review and analyze information documented in reports archived from FACT livelihood programs over the past seven years in order to observe trends in the number of and the ways (economic and social status) that women in HIV and AIDS affected households have been directly impacted by the inputs and activities given by the FACT livelihood programs.
2. Conduct an assessment of the wellbeing of the women beneficiaries attributable to FACT's livelihoods interventions.
3. Determine areas to be improved in FACT livelihood strategy to enhance the economic empowerment and wellbeing of women in households affected by HIV and AIDS.
4. Share findings and lessons learnt from the program with stakeholders and target beneficiaries and through this stakeholder consultation, use the findings to improve on the current FACT livelihoods program.

Before the commencement of data collection, a total of 30 data collectors were trained in data collection techniques and ethical issues that govern research in the two districts. The data collectors were taken from government ministries and development partners. A descriptive qualitative study design that involved the collection of targeted information from secondary sources like archived FACT reports and assessments; and through structured interviews with direct beneficiaries was adopted. Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. A total of 85 in-depth interviews were conducted with direct women beneficiaries of the livelihoods projects in the two districts. Ten key informant interviews were also done with traditional, political, religious, education and health leaders in the two districts. A total of four FGDs were done with support groups of people living HIV.

The results of the impact evaluation showed that FACT has shown remarkable progress in terms of livelihoods programming. One such success in Buhera district has been attributed to involvement of the church in leading the livelihoods projects. On another note, FACT managed to select marginalized groups of people living with HIV and supported them with livelihoods programs. Of special mention is the semi-intensive goat production project in Chipinge (ward 9) which is doing very well. There has also been a notable impact in terms of income, asset base, health and educational needs for households supported. On a different note, the results of the evaluation showed that there is lack of linkages between FACT and other government ministries, for instance, the gardening projects in Buhera lack perennial water sources which is as a result of poor citation of wells. Gender issues also arose especially during community dialogues and data validation processes conducted.

Some five critical recommendations given were as follows:

1. Using the church as a conduit through which livelihoods activities can be implemented is a good practice as noted by the continuity of such projects in Buhera district.
2. There is need for strong linkages with government ministries so that they provide technical assistance on areas FACT has limited expertise.
3. Consider supporting women communities with livelihoods programs that give quick returns like goat production and shun away from livelihoods programs that have long term benefits like the heifer project in Buhera.
4. There is need for meaningful involvement of women – do a needs assessment first, that is, use actor-oriented approach. Make women identify their actual needs.
5. Tashinga Goat Project members in Chipinge District obtain water for goats and pasture irrigation close to 3 kilometres. Consideration should be done to drill a borehole for them. Women walk such long distances to get water, making women face hard times considering that they also have other household duties to accomplish at home.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background to the impact evaluation

Over the past seven years FACT Mutare has been involved in implementation of a livelihood program aimed at uplifting the economic status of women in Buhera and Chipinge districts of Manicaland province within HIV affected households. Research has shown that economic empowerment of women for HIV and AIDS affected households is critical for sustainable livelihoods of all household members (United Nations Development Program, 2012). According to Hill (2011) livelihoods programs are known for the outcomes in uplifting women's economic status, especially women in households affected by HIV and AIDS. According to this study the economic empowerment of women is important as a means for guaranteeing families' secure livelihoods and overall well-being. Rural women's economic empowerment in particular can have a positive impact on, and is interconnected with, their social and political empowerment, through their increased respect, status, and self-confidence and increased decision-making power in households, communities, and institutions. Thus, if women in households affected by HIV and AIDS are economically empowered, she will stand a better chance of gaining respect, status and have increased household decision-making powers that can serve to mitigate the negative impacts of HIV and AIDS on the family.

Females in households affected by HIV and AIDS, face distinct constraints based on their unique position in the household including their often sole responsibility for income generation and care of the household, often taking on a higher dependency burden than that of the men (Rosenhouse, 1989). While some of these constraints can be difficult to overcome others have greater potential to be addressed through women economic empowerment. As such, FACT has embarked on provision of livelihood projects to women in households affected by HIV and AIDS. The programs have been running for seven years and it is against this background that FACT intends to conduct an assessment of the livelihood programs with a view to improve or strengthen the programs. In order to improve FACT programming efforts towards comprehensive women economic empowerment, an assessment of the impacts of the current program in Chipinge and Buhera is considered strategic if not critical.

In Buhera district, FACT supported households affected by HIV and AIDS with three distinct livelihoods programs namely: goat, heifer and gardening projects with a view to economically empower and uplift women so that they can stand a better chance of gaining respect, status and have increased household decision-making powers that can serve to mitigate the negative impacts of HIV and AIDS on the family. The goat project was initiated in 2006 and is running in 2 wards (*Bangure – ward 19 and Chimbudzi – 17*). A total of 260 goats were purchased and distributed in the 2 wards. More than 450 goats have been sold to date; assisting households in their well-being, children's education and health fees. To date, there are 888 goats in the 2 wards. On the other hand, FACT supported households affected by HIV and AIDS with heifers. Seven heifers were distributed to orphans and vulnerable children. Currently, there are 12 heifers. Furthermore, support groups of people living with HIV were supported with 6 nutrition gardens.

In Chipinge, FACT supported 200 HIV and AIDS affected households so as to improve their quality of life and food security status. The main objective of the support was to develop and strengthen the

capacity of women in households affected by HIV and AIDS so that they can make economic decisions without any challenges. The support was offered to households in two wards (*Paidamoyo – ward 9 and Tamandai – ward 14*) between 2010 and 2012. In the first phase of the project, families affected by HIV and AIDS received agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and seeds so that they grow crops with a view to mitigate food insecurity amongst the identified households. In the next phase of the project, support groups of people living with HIV were supported with semi-intensive goat production livelihoods programs as well as indigenous chicken production. The semi-intensive goat production projects started in 2012 with Tashinga Goat Production Group in Chipinge receiving 30 goats. When the projects were instituted, the aim was to alleviate poverty and suffering of such generally marginalized sect of people living with HIV. Tashinga Goat Production Group has 7 members; 6 females and 1 male.

2.2 Rationale of the impact evaluation

In spite of seven years of targeted support for women economic empowerment in HIV and AIDS affected households, FACT has conducted neither an impact assessment, nor systematic internal strategy review to provide evidence for specific economic and social outcomes being created for women within participating households and to verify the viability of the current livelihoods strategy. This has impeded the refinement and consolidation of efforts into a comprehensive economic strengthening framework for supporting women in HIV and AIDS affected households by FACT. Through a detailed assessment of these economic outcomes and an internal strategy review, FACT will be able to better target and improve its livelihood programs and to develop a set of guiding principles for consolidating and expanding programs in the future.

2.3 Goal of the evaluation

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the impact of FACT livelihoods programs on the economic status of women in households affected by HIV and AIDS in four wards of Chipinge and Buhera Districts of Manicaland Province with a view to improve FACT programming efforts towards comprehensive women economic empowerment. These findings will enable FACT to ensure effective participation and targeting of women's unmet economic empowerment needs within the livelihood programs being implemented in the two districts.

2.4 Objectives of the evaluation

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

1. Review and analyze information documented in reports archived from FACT livelihood programs over the past seven years in order to observe trends in the number of and the ways (economic and social status) that women in HIV and AIDS affected households have been directly impacted by the inputs and activities given by the FACT livelihood programs.
2. Conduct an assessment of the wellbeing of the women beneficiaries attributable to FACT's livelihoods interventions.
3. Determine areas to be improved in FACT livelihood strategy to enhance the economic empowerment and wellbeing of women in households affected by HIV and AIDS.

4. Share findings and lessons learnt from the program with stakeholders and target beneficiaries and through this stakeholder consultation, use the findings to improve on the current FACT livelihoods program.

2.5 Study questions

The following are the impact evaluation study questions that guided this research exercise:

1. What impact has FACT livelihood programs had on the economic and social status of women in households affected by HIV and AIDS?
2. What impact has FACT livelihood programs had on the well-being of women in households affected by HIV and AIDS?
3. How should the FACT livelihood strategy be improved in order to enhance the economic empowerment and wellbeing of women in households affected by HIV and AIDS?

2.6 General approach

This evaluation study adopted the descriptive cross sectional evaluation design which applies qualitative methodologies using both secondary and primary sources. Archived documents and reports were reviewed. Data collection forms which targeted specific information to track beneficiary households, FACT inputs, and progress against specific planned results were used. In addition, structured interviews were undertaken to verify information in reports and to deepen understanding about the inter-relationships between FACT inputs and outcomes, barriers and catalysts to successes, information on household wellbeing, and other social dimensions of the outcome of livelihood interventions.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study design

A descriptive qualitative study design that involved the collection of targeted information from secondary sources like archived FACT reports and assessments; and through structured interviews with direct beneficiaries was adopted. Data collected included: 1) FACT inputs; 2) FACT implementation processes; 3) economic outcomes; 4) factors impeding or catalyzing women's empowerment because of the program and 5) wellbeing of women beneficiaries. Moreover, in-depth; focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews were done with selected respondents ranging from direct project beneficiaries, ward leaders and household members.

3.2 Study population

The study population targeted all direct women beneficiaries in households affected by HIV and AIDS being supported by FACT's livelihood programs in Chipinge and Buhera Districts. FACT has been working with a total of 330 women in households affected by HIV and AIDS in a total of four wards. An average of 82 households is located in each of the four targeted wards. It must be noted that these households are fairly homogenous in terms of significant social and economic indicators. Overall, they are described as rural, poor, and vulnerable and HIV affected and infected households, the essence of them being targeted for livelihoods support. All belong to a rural setting. Overall livelihoods options were limited to subsistence agriculture. However, the study was unable to study the total population with respect to this attribute as it was too large, or simply unavailable for study. The study accordingly used a sample (a relatively small section) from within the population. It was out of this wide population that the study selected direct participants for the research to form the research sample based on the sampling method outlined below.

3.3 Sampling procedures

A sample is a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons that together comprise the subject of the study. It can be viewed as a subset of measurement drawn from a population in which the study is located (Denscombe, 2003). A sample is studied in order to understand the population from which it is drawn. The major reason for sampling is feasibility. This study worked with small samples of people, nested in their context and studied in depth. Selection of study sample households was guided by one of the principles of qualitative research of data saturation. As a starting point of selecting the number of households to be interviewed, the evaluators used 50% default proportion. In other words 50% of households capped the number of households selected for interviews. This was done in the context of qualitative research where data about a phenomenon was collected until a saturation point. So, 50% default proportion was the benchmark. Data collection stopped once the evaluators realized that saturation point has been reached. The use of 50% default proportion for a study of no known previous similar sampling thus guided the selection of households for the evaluation study.

Acknowledging that the households under study were fairly homogenous, the evaluators thus conveniently interviewed at most 30 beneficiary households from each ward for data collection, that is, those being available on the day of interview. In addition, interviews were held with key informants such as respective ward councilors, traditional and religious leaders, agriculture extension workers, health personnel and ward level gender and Ward AIDS Action Committee members. Other key informants were drawn from ward based project leaders. The respondents

targeted were assumed to give a fair generalization of the phenomenon under study given the homogeneity of the study population.

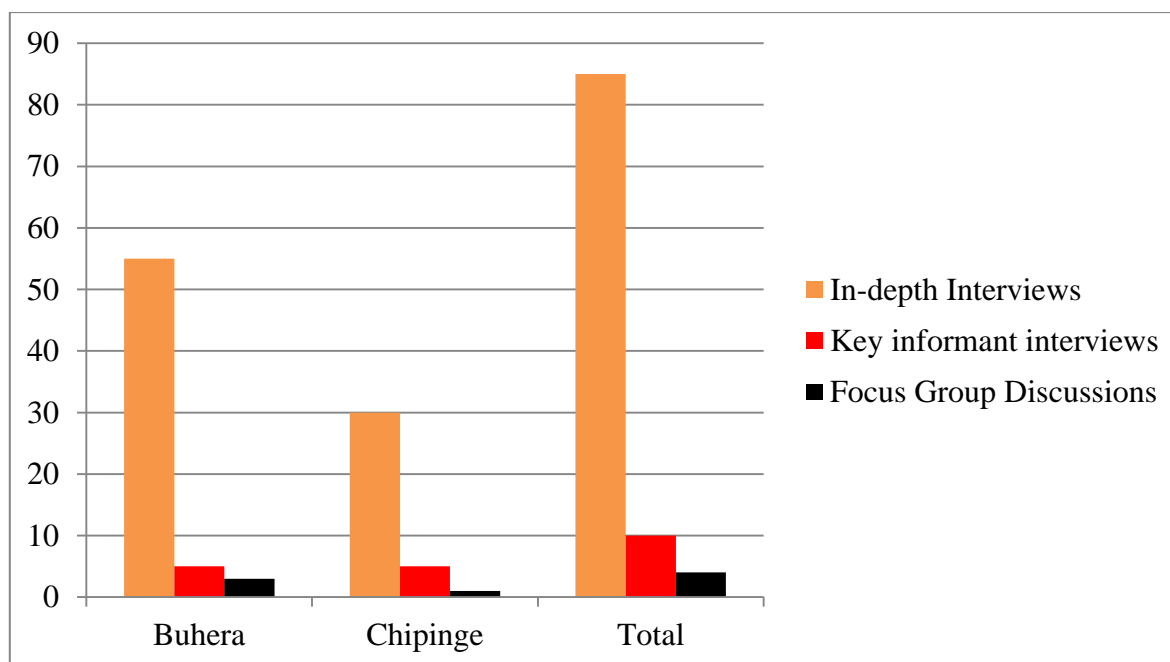
3.4 Evaluation instruments

Household in-depth interview guides were developed and administered to those households being available on the day of interview. In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with support group members who benefited from FACT’s livelihood programs. More so, key informant interviews were held with selected leadership. Evaluation assistants (data collection enumerators) were utilized in capturing and taking down field notes data during the interviews. A total of 30 data collectors (15 in Buhera and 15 in Chipinge) were trained first for 2 days in 2012 and half a day in 2014 on general data collection techniques as well as familiarization on the data collection tool which was used. Annual reports and baseline findings were reviewed to find out what the situation on the ground was before FACT’s support and the current progress done to date towards accomplishment of set outcomes. The table below shows number of respondents engaged per district.

Table 3.1: Number of respondents engaged for in-depth and key informant interviewing and FGDs held per district by ward and data collection dates

District	In-depth interviews	Key informant interviews	FGDs	Wards	Data collection dates
Buhera	55	5	3	17 & 19	01 – 04 July 2014
Chipinge	30	5	1	9 & 14	15 – 18 July 2014
TOTAL	85	10	4		

Figure 3:1 Number of respondents engaged for in-depth and key informant interviewing and Focus Group Discussions held per district



The graph above depicts that 55 in-depth interviews, 5 key informant interviews and 3 FGDs were held in Buhera district while 30 in-depth interviews, 5 key informant interviews and 1FGD were held

in Chipinge district. This translates to a sum of 85 in-depth interviews, 10 key informant interviews and 4 FGDs being conducted across the two districts.

3.5 Data collection tool training

Before the commencement of fieldwork data collection exercise, there was a half day data collection tool training which was conducted with data enumerators drawn from government ministries and development practitioners especially those that deal with women issues including women empowerment . A total of 15 data collectors from each district were trained making a sum of 30 enumerators who underwent the data collection tool training. The objectives of the data collection tool training were designed in such a way that participants should be able to:

1. appreciate the background to the livelihoods projects & data collection tool training and the need for such a training;
2. understand & demonstrate ability to use the three qualitative data collection methods utilized during the data collection exercise for the livelihoods project;
3. translate the interview guides into local and locally accepted language and
4. appreciate the need to observe universally accepted ethics in research.

The data collectors were taken through:

- Background to the impact evaluation study
- Development of uniform understanding of the data collection tools and concepts in the study
- In-depth (one-on-one); key-informant interviewing and focus group discussions facilitation. Participants later translated the interview guides into local and locally accepted languages for each district
- Ethics in implementation science research which fall on three basic universally accepted principles namely:
 - *Autonomy* – “Respect for persons applied as informed consent”
 - *Beneficence* – “First, do no harm applied as duty to minimise risks”
 - *Justice* – “Fair distribution of risks and benefits of research”

3.6 Data analysis plan

Interviewing guides and survey instruments were designed to collect data that can be analyzed using thematic codes. It is hoped that the compilation of data into emerging themes has the potential to help FACT understand how and what influenced the success and outcome of livelihoods interventions on the social and economic lives of women. A more comprehensive understanding of the barriers and catalysts for successful outcomes related to the economic empowerment of women through the FACT livelihood programs has been documented.

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM THE IMPACT EVALUATION

4.1 Buhera district

4.1.1 The goat project

FACT supported approximately 300 households affected by HIV and AIDS with three distinct livelihoods programs namely: goat, heifer and gardening projects with a view to economically empower and uplift women so that they can stand a better chance of gaining respect, status and have increased household decision-making powers that can serve to mitigate the negative impacts of HIV and AIDS on the family. The goat project was initiated in 2006 and is running in 2 wards (*Bangure – ward 19 and Chimbudzi – 17*). A total of 260 goats were purchased and distributed in the 2 wards. More than 450 goats have been sold to date; assisting households in their well-being, children's education and health fees. To date, there are 888 goats in the 2 wards. The goat project proved to be successful as quite a good number of households are now earning a living through selling the goats. Household interviewees engaged aired out that school and hospital fees are no longer a stumbling block towards the education and health of their children. Women now have income available at their immediate disposal for grinding mill funds and other basic necessities of their day to day living requirements. Women feel economically empowered as remarked by one of the interviewees who benefited from the project who said:

There has been a remarkable improvement in terms of access to health facilities and education for our children through the income from the goat project. Women are moving giant steps from poverty to stable welfare due to the advent of the goat project. We are now able to stand on our own feet.

Most of the women interviewed concurred that they can now make economic decisions at family level. Some boasted to have purchased household assets like kitchen utensils without begging for money from the savings of their husbands.

In comparison to other projects supported by FACT being implemented in the two wards, the goat project was rated as the best project that produces quick returns in a short period of time.

Challenges for the goat project

In ward 17, respondents indicated that the goat project encountered challenges which later made some households to reap close to nothing. Of special note was the extent to which disease outbreaks stripped off all their livestock. In line with this, households lacked the capacity to purchase chemicals meant for dipping their goats. As a result of this, many goats died. In ward 19, interviewed household members indicated that the major challenge of the goat project was associated with hyenas.

Hyenas are some of the most common carnivores in Africa which are nocturnal. By virtue of them being carnivorous, they majorly eat meat. They are opportunistic wild animals which feed on different types of animals including domestic animals. By virtue of their nocturnality, hyenas become



a big threat for households with goat-kraals which are not properly designed and made. Such is the
Picture 2: One of the goats that survived the vicious attack of a hyena in ward 19 – Bangure village in Buhera District

situation in ward 19 where hyenas come at night attacking the livestock.

Another challenge was associated with male household leaders who have a tendency of channelling goats meant for the project to other businesses that had nothing to do with the welfare of children and women. This implies that in some instances where efforts are being made to empower women, the African culture remains a stumbling block. Power operates within cultures in many ways: through visible forms of coercion; hidden in legal norms, policies and governance structures; (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962) and ingrained in the perceptions people have for themselves. In livelihood projects, it is essential to improve communication between men and women so that men begin to appreciate the need for such efforts. Encouraging men to be part of the livelihoods efforts plays a pivotal role in bringing a common understanding of the aim of the projects as in most societies men exercise significant power in nearly every sphere of life ranging from personal decisions regarding family matters to program decisions taken at all levels of society (ICPD Program of Action, 2010). In African culture practice, men, as the more powerful entity can use their positions as family heads to compel their subordinates (*women and children*) to act in ways they would prefer not to (Moncrieffe, 2005).

Furthermore, some goats also fell into wrong hands, that is, beneficiaries who did not understand the aim of the project. This ultimately led to the sustainability of the project compromised in some households; hence forcing such families to remain in the cycle of poverty.

On another hand, most of the respondents interviewed at household level agreed that they never underwent some training in marketing strategies. Few households had access to isolated trainings conducted by NGOs such as GOAL and World Vision. Community members who benefited from the goat project largely depended on their indigenous knowledge on rearing domestic animals rather than modern and improved methods. No advanced knowledge was documented and applied in order to boost goat production. Households that received a bit of knowledge from NGOs on how to keep domestic animals like goats showed signs of success compared to those who did not.

Respondents repeatedly indicated that FACT should also introduce other short term trainings based on goat production, management and marketing in order to keep the project lively. The general consensus of interviewees were of the feeling that medications to treat affected herds should always be in place in order to do away with unexpected loss of goats. The question to this could be: Who should provide the medication? As it stands, the respondents showed signs of donor syndrome where they are expecting FACT to continuously support the beneficiaries. There was no hope of weaning the beneficiaries from continuous support. Others also proposed that FACT should also supplement the existing projects with other related projects like poultry. It is clear from the sentiments of most of the respondents that there is need to bridge the knowledge gap on livelihoods diversity where communities should be taught on how to come up with new livelihoods projects using the existing ones. The narrow-minded thinking amongst beneficiaries needs to be wiped off through training for transformation.

4.1.2 The heifer project

On the other hand, FACT supported households affected by HIV and AIDS with heifers. Seven heifers were distributed to orphans and vulnerable children. Currently, there are 12 heifers. Considering the period the project has been running, it is clear that this project is very slow in bringing benefits to the intended beneficiaries. The heifers which were distributed had no bull to service them. Ultimately, the heifers reached and passed their heat periods without mating. Some accidentally mate with local bulls; hence the lean increase in the number of cattle to date.

Cattle are regarded as very important livestock in most African traditional cultures. A family's social status depends on the number of cattle the head of a household possesses. In essence, cattle are the backbone of rural African societies. Families attest to their prestige and social status to cattle. In these male-dominated societies, one is respected on the basis of cattle ownership. Therefore, the cattle are more for status, rather than food or resource. More cattle means a man receives respect from the elders who make overall decisions for the community. Seeing a woman with many cattle was unheard of (*taboo*) in the African culture. Customary laws made it impossible for women to own or inherit cattle. Whatever social prestige women gained from customary laws, as long as women fail to control the means of production in partnership with males, their status will remain subordinate, dangerously exposed, and subject to changing economic circumstances.

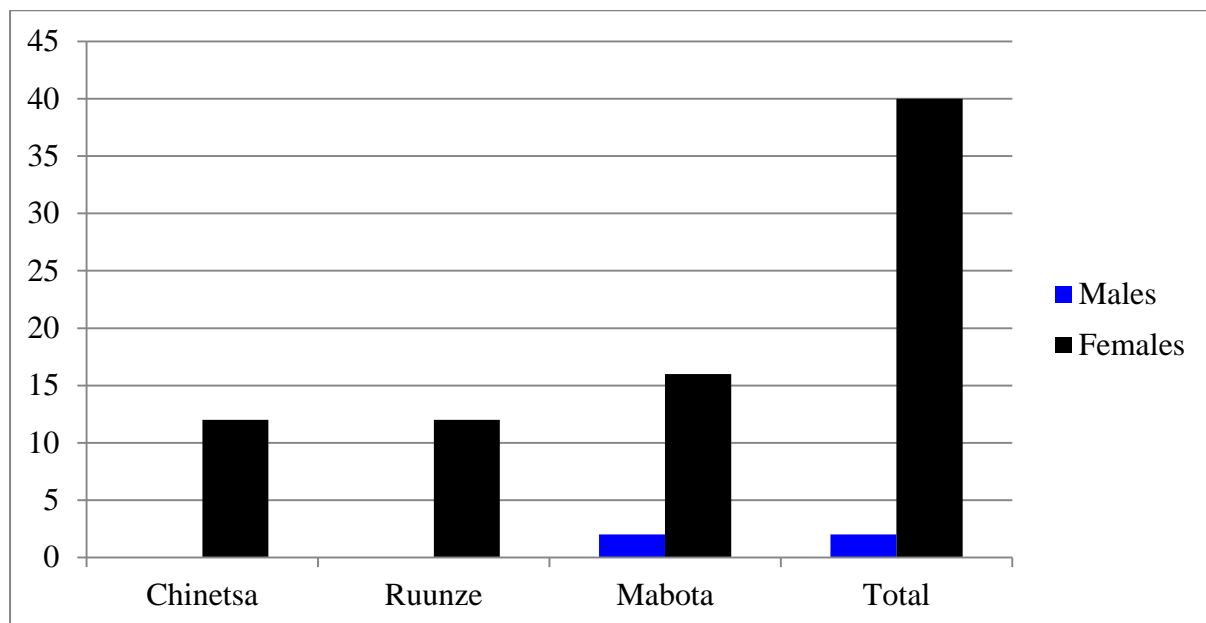
The heifer project in Buhera only gave women cultural social status but did very little to position them in terms of accruing financial benefits. This has been largely due to the cultural norms, beliefs and values inculcated in them, that many cattle means high status. Considering that many male-headed households have no cattle position widows who were supported on a very high social status. As one of the widows who benefited pointed out:

Many men do not have cattle but as for me I have some. Considering that I am a woman and widow at the same time makes me proud about the project.

4.1.3 Support groups of people living with HIV

FACT supported groups of people living with HIV with six nutrition gardens. Focus group discussions were conducted in ward 19 of Buhera where the nutrition gardens are sited. The discussion was held with members of the support groups. Three focus group discussions were conducted with three support groups of people living with HIV (*Chinetsa, Ruunze and Mabota gardening projects*). Two of the gardens visited (*Chinetsa & Ruunze*) were thriving though there is shortage of water.

Figure 4:1 - Composition of support groups' gardening projects in Buhera district disaggregated by sex



Source: Fieldwork data, 2014

The members grow various vegetables and sell them to get income for school and hospital fees and other utilities. Furthermore, the two thriving gardens' members supplement their garden income through selling surpluses from their fields like ground nuts and round nuts. They also testified that life was no longer a burden since they could cope with daily routine demands for their children. There were also other NGOs that supported the support groups with food handouts, such as Dananai and GOAL. The respondents from the support groups reported that before getting support from FACT, life was not easy. It was an impending catastrophe. It was not easy to pay school and

“It was only the revelation from FACT that delivered us from the boiling pot of poverty”

-Support group member-
Buhera district

health fees. One of the focus group discussion respondents from Chinetsa gardening project revealed that FACT assisted them as women and they were confident to be moving out of poverty. Moreover, revelations from the members of the support groups suggested that they have been economically empowered. Across all focus group discussions held, all members concurred that they never had any training pertaining to their project. So they requested short term courses in order to light up their project.

4.1.3.1 Linkages with government ministries

One of the support group gardens (*Mabota*) showed no life in it. According to the members of the group, they never used the garden since its inception. The problem was that of poor citation of both the well and garden. The garden has an unreliable source of water which makes the project less sustainable. The project should have engaged government ministries like irrigation, mechanization and District Development Fund with expertise in good citation of water sources. Members of the support group also requested for some perennial sources of water or provide water pumps that enable them to grow vegetables even in the dry season. As it stands, the project lacks sustainability. Of interest was also the availability of Ruti Dam which is just a few kilometres from the support group's gardening project. If proper linkages were done with government ministries, the gardening projects would have been thriving. The problem between development practitioners and government ministries is that they compete instead of complimenting each other. The ultimate goal of all development initiatives is to assist the community; hence there is no need for competition in the struggle to end poverty.

Across all sites visited, the members are very old women. With so many tasks to do at household level, women's involvement in gardening projects adds more burden to their already numerous household chores. There is need to involve youths in community gardens because the members met



are too old to water and sustain the garden. Support group members are not willing to transfer their gardens to areas closer to Ruti dam due to fear of crocodile attacks as well as theft of fencing material. Of note also was the unavailability of veterinary, Arex and livestock production department officers in ward 19; hence disease management is very difficult.

4.1.4 Overall picture of FACT supported projects in Buhera

Five key informant interviewees were engaged and these were with people from the: political, educational, health, religious and traditional leadership. The community leaders engaged agreed that the success of the projects in the two wards was as a result of the church's involvement. The church has been a respected entity from time immemorial. Issues of faithfulness, honesty and integrity are embedded in the teachings of most church doctrines. The church's capacity to effectively support livelihoods projects among women and vulnerable children needs to be strengthened. The leader of the livelihoods projects supported by FACT in Buhera is a local pastor. One of the local political community leaders attributed the continuity of the livelihoods projects in Buhera to the local pastor's dedication. In his comments, he said:

Had it not been of Pastor Tomu's commitment and resilience, all these projects would have been history now. The community respects him to the last note and he has been a forceful drive towards enhancement of children's education and women empowerment. He has people at his heart.

One striking question is: What will happen to the FACT supported livelihood projects in Buhera post Pastor Tomu's era?

The community leaders interviewed agreed that women now own the projects and they are responsible for making decisions about what, when and how to sell their produce. The beneficiaries understand the stewardship of the projects. Apart from payment of school and hospital fees, women have also acquired basic family assets like solar panels, radios, mobile phones and ploughs. Commenting on the viability of the projects, one key informant said:

Goats increase faster than cattle and bring relief to families in desperate situations faster.

The implication of the statement is that since the livelihoods projects were initiated with a view to mitigate the plight of families already in dire economic and social difficulties, the goat project is the answer to such a problem. Goats multiply quicker than cattle hence the need to invest in such a project that brings quicker returns. On the other hand, the traditional leader engaged felt cattle stand a better chance in terms of building social status of a household. Though the benefits seem to be long term, when they come, they are far reaching. Supporting this, the traditional leader had this to say:

From cattle, the families use the dung to fertilize their fields so as to increase crop yields, they get milk for the nutrition of their children and most importantly, the cattle plough the field.



Picture 4 - One of the heifer project beneficiaries in Buhera District showing her social status as a widow with cattle

All the key informants concurred that before the support from FACT, life was tough and for most women and children. There was high mortality rate due to poor diet, which resulted in malnutrition and kwashiorkor. In addition to this, it was not easy to pay school fees and to buy stationery for school going children. Furthermore, these people living with HIV had limited access to improved health facilities because of very little income. As for now, the projects supported by FACT alleviated their suffering as most of them can get income for basic needs. The leaders were satisfied that such vulnerable and secluded groups of people now have access to improved health through selling goats or vegetables and extra income for their households. Conclusively, the key informants highlighted that FACT and other development partners should continue to work together with government ministries in order to empower women economically.

4.2 Chipinge district

4.2.1 Community income generating livelihoods activities

Respondents engaged in in-depth household interviews agreed that families in ward 9 and 14 earn a living through a variety of livelihood activities namely; gardening, farming, buying and selling, money savings, poultry and goats, and dairy farming. Interviewees reported that development partners support such livelihoods efforts were and some. Some of the programs articulated as being supported by development partners were as tabulated below:

Table 4.1 Programs supported by FACT and government ministries in wards in wards 9 and 14 (Chipinge District)

Program	Season/ Year	Organization/Ministry	Ward
Farming inputs	2012-2013 season	FACT	9
Goat project	2012	FACT	9

Program	Season/ Year	Organization/Ministry	Ward
Poultry feeds	2011	FACT	14
Money Saving	2013	FACT	9
Handouts	2013	NRC	9
Bee-keeping (epiculture)	2014	Agritex	9
Gardens	2012	FACT	9 & 14
Dairy farming	2012 – 2013	Livestock Production Department	9
Accelerated Learning Program	2014	FACT – VB	9 & 14
Conservation Farming	2013	FACT	9 & 14

Source: Fieldwork data, 2014

4.2.2 Situation before the programs/support

Food, assets, income, education for children and health for the family

Most the interviewed household members headed by women (26 families) agreed that their situation was unbearable in terms of food availability, assets, income, education for children and general health for the families. However, four households indicated that they had enough food, assets and income for the general upkeep of their families before FACT's support. In this instance, it can be safely concluded that most of the households had inadequate food stores, assets and income before FACT came in to support them. All interviewees engaged pointed out that payment of school fees was a challenge. More so, there had been poor health due to poor nutrition and stress. Stigmatization due to HIV positivity status of an individual was very high. This was due to limited education and lack of information on positive living as well general acceptance of individuals' HIV positive status.

4.2.3 Change after support

The 30 households engaged headed by women unanimously concurred that there has been a great positive change in their lives due to the FACT supported livelihoods projects. On the one hand, families pointed out that they managed to purchase livestock after a bumper harvest from the agricultural inputs received from FACT. After conservation farming training from FACT staff, household members interviewed boasted to have increased their yields after working on small pieces of land. On the other hand, some respondents indicated that they have started new business ventures such as tuck shops, macadamia and coffee nurseries as a result of trainings obtained from FACT. Furthermore, other interviewees were ready to prove that they bought considerable number of assets like ploughs, welding machines, sleeping beds, electrical gadgets, kitchen utensils and other furniture. One of the women beneficiaries had this to share:

Before FACT came in to support us, life was very hard especially for us people living with HIV. My house was built of mud by then. When FACT came in to support us, mostly with life coaching skills and livelihoods projects, I have managed to build a new brick house under asbestos sheets – a dream I never thought will come true. Recently I bought a brand new plough from the income I got from FACT supported projects. Is that not an achievement in life?

The councillor for ward 9 indicated how gender-based violence has been reduced due to the FACT supported projects as women in households were now able to add income to their families. She was happy that at least women are now being recognized as partakers and not supporters of development in her ward. According to her, there has been significant health improvement especially on low mortality rates. To add on to that, she indicated that women now have income to support their children educationally and health wise. They also have capacity to buy basic needs like food and clothes. Across the entire key informants interviewed, there has been a general consensus that household economic-related conflicts have significantly gone down since women now have economic muscle to cater for daily basic needs of their families. Gone are the days when women used to wait for financial support from their husbands. Instead, women are showing better signs of financial stability compared to their counterparts. However, women's economic independence was pointed out as widely known to be a source of conflict in some cases.

4.2.4 Women economic empowerment

A focus group discussion held with Tashinga Goat Project members revealed that all the group members felt economically empowered as a result of their semi-intensive goat production project supported by FACT. The group which is composed of seven members (1 male and 6 females) indicated that despite their HIV positive status, their social status has greatly improved. Instead of waiting for the goat project to support them, they have started loaning schemes from the profits they are realizing from the goat project. Their records showed that they have close to \$1 200.00 loaned and are expecting to receive 20% interest. The chairperson of the group boastfully said:

From being a stigmatized and discriminated group, we are assuming a “broker/ money-lender’s” role where community members are coming to get loans from us. Coming to borrow money from who? From a group of HIV positive women! This is really unheard of but it is happening here in ward 9. Thank you FACT for your everlasting support!

The women are economically empowered as they are now able to fend for their families. All the women engaged testified that they now have economic decision making powers where they could decide on their own what, when and how to use their income without forced effort to consult their husbands. The women positioned themselves as people of a high social class where they denied being used through engagement in miniature piece jobs like weeding other people's fields for insignificant payment. Rather they are venturing into bigger business adventures like cross border trading.

“We no longer do miniature jobs like weeding.”

Tashinga Goat Project member-
(Chipingwe district)

4.2.5 Marketing strategies, domestic animal disease management trainings

The interviewees were affirmative that they received training in marketing strategies. Some of the stakeholders that offered training were: FACT; Agritex; Land O Lakes; NRC and the veterinary government department. The average period for the training was 5 days then follow up refresher

trainings. As for marketing strategies, respondents pointed out that they were trained in buying and selling; record keeping/ documentation, profit and loss; self reliance, money lending, how to have quality products; voluntarily helping the needy in the community so that customers begin to like their products; identification of businesses then possibility for markets. During their training in domestic animal disease management, respondents were taken through topics on animal health which covers diagnosis, treatment and control/prevention. Due to the training, respondents listed the following as some of the benefits they gained:

- *Ability to understand buying and selling techniques*
- *Capacity to select profit making projects*
- *Competence in strengthening existing projects due to knowledge gained*
- *Skills in documentation as a good practice*
- *Expertise in domestic animal disease management*

4.2.6 Use of knowledge gained

The interviewees indicated that through the trainings they received they now have viable/sound income generating projects. They also confirmed that knowledge transfer on skills gained is now high on income generating projects at community level as well as at household level. Some community members who did not attend the training are now engaged in income generating projects through use of the skills they received from those who were trained. Another issue raised was the skill in customer care among community members.

4.2.7 Project sustainability

The respondents from Tashinga Goat Project were confident that if FACT decides to leave, they can continue and do well in their project. However, the members were quick to state that they need more knowledge and skills since knowledge is dynamic. Since they live in remote rural areas, the members felt that FACT may come periodically with new information and innovations that are of benefit to them. The government on the other hand ought to continue supporting the projects/ efforts and also do follow ups and refresher trainings in a complementary manner as opposed to competition.

4.2.8 Impact of the project

Livelihoods projects beneficiaries cited the following as immediate impact of the support:

- Income:** Women now have cash flow though some have loans to repay
- Assets:** Most of them have managed to buy assets (building brick houses under asbestos sheets, ploughs, welding machines, sleeping beds, electrical gadgets, kitchen utensils and furniture and livestock)
- Health:** Low mortality rates have been recorded in the ward. Households can now pay treatment fees. Families can now afford to eat a balanced diet since they were taught on the advantages.
- Education:** Households now have the ability to pay school fees for their children. Some can now pay their children's school fees in advance, for instance, for the whole year. Because of a continuous cash flow from the livelihoods projects, women are now able to pay education

fees for other community orphans and vulnerable children. More so, the knowledge they have gained is being cascaded to children at household level.

5 COMMUNITY DIALOGUES – GENDER ISSUES

Community dialogues and data validation processes were done with government ministries, development practitioners and community members who were target beneficiaries of the livelihoods projects. It was noted with great concern that there is a huge gap in interaction between researchers and the researched. Over and over again, researchers perform studies of various forms in communities and upon finishing, they just disappear without giving feedback of the findings to the communities; yet the key aim of conducting studies is to provide feedback to the communities so that acute measures and decisions are taken to correct problematic situations. Therefore it was the purpose of the community dialogue and findings validation meetings to share research findings for the projects implemented in Buhera and Chipinge districts for the past seven years.

5.1 Reactions from participants – Buhera

- The department of wildlife management needs to be engaged so as to find long lasting solutions to livestock night attacks by hyenas in Buhera.
- If the gardening projects are to survive, there is need to provide perennial sources of water like boreholes, water tanks, water pumps and fencing materials to the support group members.
- Another young pastor with similar characteristics as the current one needs to be mentored as a leadership transition plan if the livelihoods projects are to survive the test of time. However, it was noted that FACT should not limit itself to mentor another pastor but look for any other person who possesses similar characteristics and not necessarily from a Christian background
- Low male involvement in the projects also aroused debate.
- One of the participants was of the view that the projects seemed to be harmful to men in particular as women empowerment seemed to give balance of power or giving more powers to women as they become socially and economically strong.
- The general feeling of the participants was that there have been positive impacts of the projects as women benefited directly and indirectly. The projects also boosted women's self esteem and confidence in such a patriarchal society.

5.2 Reactions from participants – Chipinge

- One participant from Agritex was grateful about the results and the efforts being done by the support groups and encouraged them not to slacken but to keep on working hard without expecting any token of appreciation since it is their project.
- One question posed was on whether FACT was still going to support the support group members in Tamandai with a goat project.

- Though initiatives of livelihoods projects were undertaken by FACT, it was greatly felt that women were being overburdened with NGO activities as these women were found in other development-oriented programs assuming active roles.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS

6.1 Buhera District

The following are recommendations for the Buhera livelihoods projects supported by FACT:

- Using the church as a conduit through which livelihoods activities can be implemented is a good practice as noted by the continuity of such projects in Buhera district.
- There is need for strong linkages with government ministries so that they provide technical assistance on areas FACT has limited expertise.
- FACT should introduce other short term trainings based on goat production, management and marketing in order to keep the project lively.
- FACT should also supplement the existing livelihoods projects with other related projects like poultry. It is clear from the sentiments of respondents that there is need to bridge the knowledge gap on livelihoods diversity where communities should be taught on how to come up with new livelihoods projects using the existing ones. The dogmatic thinking amongst beneficiaries needs to be wiped off through training for transformation.
- The heifer project only gave women cultural social status but did very little to position them in terms of accruing financial benefits. It is therefore recommended that FACT ought to help the communities to diversify such livelihoods into those that offer quick returns.
- The department of wildlife management needs to be engaged so as to find long lasting solutions to livestock night attacks by hyenas in Buhera.
- If the gardening project is to survive, provide a perennial source of water like boreholes, water tanks, water pumps and fencing materials to the support group members considering that the bulk of the members are aged women.

6.2 Chipinge District

The following are recommendations for the Chipinge livelihoods programs supported by FACT:

- Interviewed women respondents felt there is need to undergo trainings on conflict management as men are feeling threatened by the financial stability that their wives in the goat project are having.
- There is need for meaningful involvement of women as they are the affected group – do a needs assessment first, that is, use actor-oriented approach. Make women identify their actual needs.

7 CRITICAL EMERGING ISSUES AND CONCLUSION

Today the issues of livelihoods have taken centre stage, simply because the country needs to create solutions towards gender equality between men and women. Gender inequalities between men and

women have failed to alleviate women's poverty. In essence, women's needs with those of men do not ensure sustainable livelihoods for women in particular. To support women's economic empowerment, gender equality and equity need to be treated as fundamental components. In order to end poverty and hunger, economically empowering women has been viewed as a potential avenue to achieve such a goal. Livelihoods programs can sustain many families if they are done with women in mind. From this impact evaluation study, four critical issues emerged which were as follows:

- Involvement of the church in leading the livelihoods projects made the livelihoods projects in Buhera succeed, hence this should be taken seriously when programming.
- Gender mainstreaming in livelihoods options is crucial. FACT managed to select marginalized groups of people living with HIV and supported them with a semi-intensive goat production livelihood program particularly in Chipinge (Ward 9) where the project is doing very well. It was reported that cases of economic gender-based violence have significantly dropped as women now have an independent cash flow for daily-household use.
- Women who were assisted with livelihoods projects in the two districts showed that they were an economically empowered group with various self-initiated income generating programs like loaning schemes. Some women have managed to accumulate assets for household use as a result of the livelihoods projects.
- There has been lack of linkages between FACT and other government departments (*District Development Fund*) especially on location of wells for gardening projects in Buhera district.

It can be concluded that the projects supported by FACT in Buhera and Chipinge districts were a necessary undertaking as they had more positive results than negative ones on the community. The projects economically empowered women and the society as well as upgrading their social well being. The greater number of women is now in a position to independently send children to school, own property and pay hospital fees; giving them a voice to decide on what is good for them. Some women gained social status. In some few instances, however, the livelihoods programs caused family disputes.

8 REFERENCES

1. Bachrach, P. and M. Baratz. (1962). "Two Faces of Power", in *The American Political Science Review* 56(4): 947-952.
2. Denscombe, M. (2003). *The good research guide: for small-scale social research project*, 2nd edition. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
3. ICPD Program of Action, 2010. Available online on: http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2008/en/03_promoting_gender_equality.html (Accessed August 19, 2014).
4. Moncrieffe, J. (2005). "Beyond Categories: Power, Recognition and the Conditions for Equity." Background paper for the World Development Report 2006: Equity and Development. New York: The World Bank.
5. Rosenhouse, S. (1989), Female-headed households: Among the poorest? – Research paper: Available online on: http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/3/0/7/7/3/pages307730/p307730-7.php (Accessed June 10, 2014).

9 APPENDICES

9.1 Data enumerators' list

9.1.1 Buhera district

Surname & Forename	Organization	Sex
1. Sithole Elias	New Start Centre	M
2. Magore Josiah	ZAOGA	M
3. Tomu Admire	United Baptist Church	M
4. Mukute Pauline	ZNNP+	F
5. Mapanzure Everjoy	MoHCC	F
6. Mkwachari Maidei	Local Government	F
7. Mupandawana Kudzai	Dananai	F
8. Murwisi Joyce	New Life Centre	F
9. Zvabva Priscilla	MYIEE	F
10. Tirivavi Julia	MWAGCD	F
11. Chiwandire Perpetua N.	MoHCC	F
12. Mutunhire Lot	Women Affairs	M
13. Matsvai Trynos	Local Government	M
14. Mutsigiri Clever	FACT	M
15. Dembo William	President's Office	M

9.1.2 Chipinge district

Surname & Forename	Organization	Sex
1. Meda Locadia B.J.	Ministry of Education	F
2. Bhamu Brian K.	VB-FACT Chipinge	M
3. Muyambo Margret	MoHCC	F
4. Chako Ratidzai P.	Local Government	F
5. Munjira Regina	COPAZ	F
6. Chakona Phinias	Social Services	M
7. Jack Rudo	Community Volunteer	F
8. Makwanya London	National AIDS Council	M
9. Mundoza Tawanda	Irrigation Department	M
10. Makumire Tabitha	ZNNP+	F
11. Maposa Christine	UCCZ Minister	F

12. Makuyana Thandiwe	Women Voluntarism	F
13. Matikiti Sipiwe	MWAGCD	F
14. Machaka Prince	MYIEE	M
15. Manyera Farai	National Council of Disabled Persons in Zimbabwe (NCDPZ)	M

9.2 Gallery of Pictures



Part of the 15 data enumerators preparing to go into the field in ward 17 of Buhera District



Some of the heifers that were distributed to widows in Buhera ward 19 for educational assistance of OVC



One of the poorly sited gardens (*Mabota*) in ward 19 of Buhera district that never benefited the women since its inception in 2006



Goats at Pastor Tomu's residence waiting to be distributed to other needy households



The Agriculture Extension officer in ward 9 – Chipinge district, Mr. Samson Mwaenga, (*in blue jacket*) during an interview as a key informant interviewee



Tashinga Goat Project support group members during a focus group discussion – Chipinge district